

My Prized Needle and Thread

https://jojowiki.com/My_Prized_Needle_and_Thread (see trivia for an explanation about the puns)

Chapter 1

Under a blue sky that seemed to be on the verge of falling at any moment, stretched an endless vineyard. The blazing sunlight and the lush green leaves created a pastoral atmosphere in this Sicilian winery.

"——I'm not asking a difficult *question* here," said Salute, the Don of the Sicilian gang who used the winery as his hideout.

In the underground storage room, where countless wine barrels lined the walls, he pressed the barrel of his shotgun against the nose of the captured "*mammone*" (mama's boy) and tilted his head curiously.

"'Passione' is your organization, ain't it? You're telling me you don't know the identity of your boss? That ain't normal, y'knoooooow ? Like, have you ever seen a student who doesn't know their teacher's face? Hm?"

"N-no matter what you say... I don't know what I don't know!"

The "*mammone*" Pesci, drenched in sweat and tears, rattled the handcuffs restraining his left arm. Since he'd woken up in this basement, his left arm had been shackled to a pipe on the wall. Using his *ability* was hopeless too.

(*I'm sure my teammates... my big bro will come to rescue me! Then I'll kill this guy so easily...! But, when is that going to happen...?*)

Without a moment's pause, the shotgun's blast echoed through the basement. Seeing red wine flow from a freshly punctured barrel nearby, Pesci, who had been sobbing, suddenly stiffened in terror.

"Don't you dare spout nonsense! You sniveling, noisy *mammone* ! You want me to blow that potted-plant-looking head of yours clean off right now———?!"

The sound of the shotgun's pump action echoed again and again through the storage room.

Terrified, Pesci's paralyzed lips moved desperately as he managed to squeak out in a thin voice,
"B-but I'm telling the truth...!"

His words spilled out in a broken, faltering stream.

"I really don't know...! E-even the executives don't know this kind of information...! H-how could I possibly know something like that...?!"

Still pointing the barrel at him, Salute stroked his short, white-tinted beard as if deep in thought.

"...It doesn't seem like you're lying."

"A *mammone* like you couldn't keep your mouth shut in this kind of situation anyway. In that case, let's change the question. Tell me everything you know about the organization, about *Passione*. How many members do you have? Where are your hideouts?"

Salute sneered at Pesci, "Or are you gonna say that you don't even know *that* eittheeer ?"

Pesci's face twisted in anguish. He truly knew nothing about the boss. That's why he *couldn't* spill the beans .

Just like you can't get anything out of an empty piggy bank when you break it, there was no way for him to talk about something he didn't know. However, when it came to the organization and the team, it was a different story.

He knew. And because he knew, this situation was *dangerous* .

Unimaginably dangerous!

Pesci's gaze was fixed on the barrel of the shotgun aimed squarely at him. It looked as if a bullet could be fired at any moment, and his breathing grew ragged and unsteady.

There was no guarantee of rescue. If he didn't answer, he would undoubtedly be killed.

(*If... if... if I don't answer——!!*)

Growing impatient, Salute fired at another wine barrel, the gunshot echoing through the underground storage.

"Answer me already! Do you strain this much when you're taking a shit too, huh?! You constipated asshole——!!"

Pressing his trembling right hand to his lips, Pesci managed to force out a strained voice.

"My... m-my teammates...! My team is...!"

A grin spread across Salute's face.

From the shadows of the storage room, a gangster silently observed the scene.

(*You've let me down completely, Pesci...*)

Pesci's teammate and big brother figure, Prosciutto, had been watching the entire exchange from start to finish. His eyes showed an unmistakable look of disappointment from watching over the "team's rookie."

He had harbored just a sliver of hope.

He'd hoped to catch a glimpse of Pesci's unseen **resolve** —a sign that he was ready to become a true gangster.

There was no real reason for his hope. It was nothing more than "intuition."

He felt that something about Pesci had seemed different from the average lowlife or thug.

Prosciutto had vaguely believed that if Pesci had the right opportunity, he could **grow** and one day become a real man who could grasp **glory** with his own hands.

But he had been wrong.

Pesci had failed his mission. He had botched it completely.

Not only had he failed to eliminate Salute, but he had been captured instead. And now, he was on the verge of spilling crucial information that could endanger his teammates' lives.

All of it was because of the cowardice that lay deeply buried in his heart.

Pesci had *never killed anyone* .

Even though he was part of a gang—specifically in its darkest depths, the “Hitman Team”—he had never taken a life with his own hands.

Prosciutto let out a heavy sigh.

Just as Salute said, Pesci was nothing more than a pampered *mammone* . He constantly endangered the team, and in the end, it was always someone else who had to clean up his messes.

(*It seems I was wrong about you...!*)

A dry wind and an eerie, smoky haze began to silently drift through the basement.

*Pesci. In the end, you're just a mammone. You won't **grow** , and you'll never grasp **glory** with those hands. So this will be your **end** .*

Now I've gotta wipe up the crap your ass left behind.

" The Grateful Dead! I'll finish this myself! Right here, right now!!"

Chapter 2

—Suits!

This garment, which originated from the "lounge suit" of the 19th century, is now worn worldwide as the ideal work attire for men. While its birthplace is famously England, the suit culture that spread to Italy underwent a unique evolution.

The English suit, known as a "modern suit of armor," is rigid, robust, and structured, embodying masculinity. In contrast, the Italian suit, influenced by the warm climate and picturesque landscapes, prioritizes comfort above all else. Its tailoring is soft and lightweight.

Just as tailoring differs between countries, it also varies across regions within Italy. In the north, Milanese suits reflect a "structured" style reminiscent of the British tradition. Meanwhile, in the south, Neapolitan suits, while "light and soft," feature cuts and stitches that are rougher in appearance. Sitting between the two extremes is the Florentine style of central Italy, representing the "ultimate balance." Needless to say, the finish and style can differ depending on the tailor or craftsman creating the suit.

Nowadays, "Made in Italy" suits are so popular that they surpass even the famed Savile Row in England. Countless fashion-conscious individuals travel across the seas to Italy in search of the world's only "ultimate *su misura* (bespoke suit)" crafted uniquely for them.

"How does it feel, Signore Prosciutto?"

The elderly maestro, both the shop owner and craftsman, asked with a warm smile as he inquired about the comfort of the nearly finished bespoke suit.

A jacket in a chic shade. A concave silhouette with high sleeve caps and sharply contoured shoulders. Trousers designed to maintain a sleek, straight look even when bending the knees, offering excellent mobility.

Standing in front of the full-length mirror, Prosciutto repeatedly adjusted his posture to let the suit conform to his body, his sharp glare piercing his reflection through the glass, as if staring daggers.

"How does it feel to wear? I hope it meets your expectations."

With those words from the maestro as his cue, Prosciutto smoothed his blonde hair with both hands and straightened the jacket collar again. Despite its structured finish, the suit moved perfectly with his body, and he was clearly pleased with its comfort.

"It's better than I expected," Prosciutto replied, already growing attached to the unfinished bespoke suit.

They were in a luxury *sartoria* (tailor's shop) in Florence, central Italy.

A *sarto* is a tailor. The term "maestro" refers to the pinnacle of craftsmanship, sometimes called *sarto finito*.

Just as the world's well-dressed individuals frequent tailors who suit their preferences and drape line (suit's silhouette), this high-end shop in Florence was one of Prosciutto's regular sartorial stops.

"Suits are... for me, both *workwear* and *everyday clothes*," Prosciutto said, as though addressing his reflection in the mirror, continuing:

"If you focus too much on appearances and go overboard with a structured cut, it feels like you're constantly on edge and can't relax at all. On the other hand, if the tailoring is too light, you end up being too laid-back. Balance is important in everything, isn't it? You could call it contrast, too! The key is that you're the one who makes the decision. In that sense, I *like* this shop's tailoring."

It was the highest compliment from Prosciutto, and the elderly maestro's face broke into a pleased smile.

"Then shall we proceed as planned?"

Prosciutto replied with a short "Yeah" as he began to take off the jacket. His eyes suddenly fell on the calendar on the table.

"...It's *today*, isn't it?" he murmured to himself, prompting the maestro to ask, "Pardon?"

"Nothing... I was just wondering about the jacket I left here."

"You mean the *white flannel* one? That was repaired last night... and your companion came to pick it up this morning. You know, the one with the green hair, all bouncy and sprightly."

"...Pesci?"

The puzzled expression on Prosciutto's face made the once-cheerful maestro suddenly look uneasy. "Was that a problem?" he asked hesitantly.

Prosciutto stayed silent for a moment before finally replying with a short "...No," and said nothing further.

" *Caspita* (Wow)!"

The exclamation echoed through the *sarto*'s shop.

As Prosciutto stepped out of the fitting room, he noticed a man standing before one of the full-length mirrors in the center of the floor. The man, trying on a jacket, was a tall, slender gentleman with

neatly combed salt-and-pepper hair, looking impeccable in his suit.

There were no other customers in sight. Two men in suits guarded the entrance, while several others stood scattered throughout the store, watching Prosciutto and the gentleman from a distance.

"When it comes to off-the-rack suits, back in my younger days, most of them were hardly wearable, poor-quality junk with slapped-together fabric. The kind of cheap fabric that wasn't even good enough to wipe your ass after a crap, y'know? But this one's nice!"

As he looked down at the jacket reflected in the mirror, the man remarked that it seemed good enough.

"The fabric's excellent, but the mechanical stitching lacks playfulness and feels restrictive. And for me, it's too heavy. People often say that tailoring in Central Italy takes the best of the north and south. Sure, calling it **balanced** sounds nice enough. But if you ask me, it's just **half-assed**. A suit is a second skin, another version of yourself. There's no way I could relax in a suit like this."

The man removed the off-the-rack jacket and changed back into his own. The "white flannel" piece with its uneven pick-stitched lapel roll, formed an asymmetrical, imperfect aesthetic. Prosciutto definitely recognized it. No— it was the spitting image. He was wearing a jacket tailored in the southern Neapolitan style, which Prosciutto knew well.

"Just as I thought, nothing beats a *su misura* (bespoke) suit, especially one from Naples. What's your opinion, *Signore*? Would a Neapolitan suit feel too light for you?"

The man turned, revealing a pistol in his hand.

"Wouldn't you agree, Little Prosciutto?"

At his signal, the other men scattered around the shop raised their weapons, all pointing them at Prosciutto.

"It wasn't easy finding this *sarto* . Today is *my brother's funeral* . There's not much time before noon, but this won't take long!"

The man thrust his pistol toward Prosciutto's forehead.

"Now hand it over— *Ago's jacket* !"

"...So you're *Filo* ?"

Prosciutto, clad in a **structured black suit** , now faced Filo, who was dressed in a **soft white suit** . The two men stood opposed.

Staring down the man aiming a pistol at him, Prosciutto's mind turned to yet another Neapolitan-tailored jacket he knew all too well.

Chapter 3

About ten days ago.

Prosciutto and Pesci carried out a mission as part of La Squadra Esecuzioni (the Hitman Team), attacking a brothel. Their objective was to eliminate Ago, the manager of the establishment.

Ago was a born gangster. Alongside his sharp-minded elder brother, the godfather Filo, Ago was known for his hot-blooded, combat-ready nature. The "Brother Gangsters, Filo and Ago," were somewhat infamous in southern Italy.

The organization that backed Prosciutto and his team, *Passione*, was the most feared criminal organization in Italy and across Europe. Countless rival groups had fallen, crushed, or absorbed into *Passione*'s ever-growing sphere of influence.

Filo's group had been one such casualty, bowing before *Passione*'s overwhelming power. What followed was a nominal alliance that was little more than a master-servant relationship, with *Passione* holding complete authority.

While Filo understood the need for patience and biding his time, Ago could not accept this "caged" existence. Ignoring his brother's repeated warnings, Ago secretly expanded into prostitution, gambling, and loan sharking. He even developed his own drug routes, eventually incurring *Passione*'s wrath.

The Boss decided on Ago's elimination. The organization was spared from destruction solely due to Filo's obedience and his remaining value to *Passione*.

For Filo, it was an agonizing decision. However, his duty as godfather of his organization demanded the ruthless choice to abandon his brother.

"...Hey. Hey, are you even listening?"

The sound of bodies slamming together and shrill moans echoed from various parts of the brothel.

Climbing the stairs, Prosciutto suddenly stopped and turned around to address the subordinate trailing behind him.

"—Pesci."

Standing motionless halfway up the stairs, Pesci finally responded with a confused "Huh?"

He tilted his neck, though the distinction between his head and shoulders was barely visible. His green hair, resembling the leaves of a radish pulled from the ground, swayed slightly. Distracted by the sounds of the brothel, a line of drool nearly escaped his half-open mouth before he sniffled it back. His eyes followed Prosciutto up the stairs.

"...What? What is it?"

"When we reach the door to Ago's room, you'll attack the people inside first with your Beach Boy . With your ability, you don't even need to look inside to sense how many enemies are there. You can sense their *presence* . The worst scenario would be missing someone hidden out of sight. With your Stand, you can neutralize them for sure. That's why I entrusted you with this task."

Prosciutto paused and glanced down at Pesci's crotch.

"You're... not seriously *turned on* , are you...?"

"What?! N-no, I'm not! It's just the fabric creasing! I swear, I'm not hard or anything!"

"You'd better not be. We didn't come here to get one off, you know!"

"I said it's not like that!" Pesci retorted, pouting. "Geez... even if you're my big bro , you shouldn't stare at someone's crotch like that!"

He loudly slurped his carbonated soda through a straw from a paper

cup. It was the leftovers from a quick fast-food meal eaten earlier. It was mostly melted ice, with barely anything left inside.

"...But you know, big bro , I'm curious. I've been hearing a *man's grunts* from that room for a while now. He sounds like he's really enjoying himself. What kind of technique does the woman have to make him feel that good...?"

Glancing back toward a room further down the hallway with a gap in the door, Pesci spoke excitedly, "So, just for a bit..." He turned back down the stairs, curiosity overtaking him.

Suppressing his excitement, he quietly peeked into the room from the hallway.

A man lay on the bed, flat on his back. A silhouette of a woman hovered between his legs, her face buried in his groin.

"Why'd you shrivel up? Get hard already! I'll make you scream again in no time!"

"Huh? W-what the hell!? Why'd I suddenly lose it?! Wait... you... *you're an old hag now?! When did that happen?!* There's no way I can get it up now!"

"Gahhhh!" Pesci yelped, falling flat onto his backside in shock. "Th- This is...?! Big bro?! "

Standing beside Prosciutto was a grotesque, demonic being.

The entity had no lower half, supported instead by disturbingly muscular forelimbs. Its entire body was covered in countless grotesque eyeballs, oozing smoke that filled every corner of the brothel.

" The Grateful Dead! Plans have changed. Fortunately, there's still some ice left," Prosciutto said with a grin. "Pesci, this should help you focus on the mission now!"

The prostitute and the man in the room began to age rapidly, their bodies drying out as if time itself was devouring them.

A Stand that induces aging and desiccation in living beings... That was the power of The Grateful Dead!

With the power called a "Stand ability," Prosciutto had eliminated countless targets before.

Reaching the room where Ago was, Prosciutto kicked the door down without hesitation.

" So much for letting *me* handle it... "

"Shut up. It's not necessary anymore, is it?"

Ignoring Pesci's lighthearted complaint with an irritated look, Prosciutto stepped into the room.

Inside, there were several men, but most of them were already on the brink of death.

At the back of the room, behind a desk, a man quickly moved. His gun was trained on Prosciutto.

" Beach Boy! "

Pesci, gripping the "rod" that had suddenly appeared in his right

hand, reeled in the skeleton-shaped spool in his left. In an instant, the gun the man had been holding was yanked from his grasp.

Like Prosciutto, Pesci was also a Stand user, as was typical of their team. His fishing rod-shaped Stand, Beach Boy , allowed Pesci to skillfully manipulate its "needle and thread" (hook and line) to take down enemies with precision.

Stands are invisible to anyone who is not a Stand user.

Ago, unable to comprehend what had just happened, froze in place.

Prosciutto's gaze shifted to Ago's desk. On it sat a glass with a bit of grappa—a traditional Italian brandy—remaining, cooled by ice.

" *The chilled liquor must have dulled The Grateful Dead 's aging ability... Lucky bastard,*" Prosciutto muttered.

" *Passione... is it?* "

Ago's voice trembled as he looked at his aging subordinates, the gun that had flown from his grasp, and the wrinkles rapidly forming on his own hands.

"I've heard the rumors... That some people in Passione have *mysterious powers* ! You've come to kill me, haven't you...?"

"Your brother's already aware. Help isn't coming."

Prosciutto and Ago faced each other across the desk. Sweat ran from Ago's forehead, trailing down his cheek.

Relaxing his guard slightly, Ago let out a laugh.

"I knew this would happen eventually... But I couldn't help myself... This is just how I am. I've been nothing but a burden to my brother..."

Ago's demeanor, as he spoke those words like a confession, conveyed his clear *resolve* as a gangster, a willingness to accept whatever was about to befall him.

"I've got one last request. Would you mind... if I took off my jacket?"

Prosciutto glanced at Ago's jacket. A white flannel piece. The wrinkles on the sleeves and the irregular, hand-stitched finish clearly showed that it was made in Naples.

"...That's a fine suit," Prosciutto muttered softly.

Ago shared the sentiment. "This was tailored for my brother and me as a matching set," he said, slowly removing the jacket. "From the *needle* to the *thread*, my brother oversaw every detail. If my blood were to stain the 'brotherly memories' we made, I wouldn't be able to face him."

After carefully placing the jacket on a hanger, Ago turned back to Prosciutto. Standing tall, he spread his arms in surrender and said simply, "Kill me."

A brief silence followed. Ago's *resolve* as a gangster and the bond of these brothers. It all stirred something in Prosciutto, and for a moment, he found himself unable to act.

Crunch, crunch, crunch.

The sound of grinding ice broke the quiet.

Turning around, Prosciutto saw Pesci devouring ice with a casual, almost indifferent attitude, as if their work here was already done.

Watching his subordinate fish another piece of ice from the paper cup, Prosciutto called his name in an oddly calm voice.

"...Pesci."

"Huh?"

"You do it."

"...What?"

"You heard me. You're going to kill him."

The piece of ice slipped from Pesci's fingers and skidded across the floor.

The confidence Pesci had earlier was gone, replaced by sweat pouring down his face.

"B-Bro?! Why all of a sudden... Why are you saying that...?!"

"Pesci, Pesci, Pesci... you mammone, Pesciiii! Don't tell me you're planning to make me handle every little thing for you, are you? How long are you going to let someone else wipe your ass? Huh?"

Prosciutto pressed his index finger firmly against Pesci's chest.

"We're a team! We're not like those hyenas who prattle on about *'trust'* and *'reliability'* but never back it up with their actions. If I

made the first move, then it's *your job to finish it!*"

With a commanding tone, Prosciutto barked one final order: "Do it, Pesci!"

The intense pressure and overwhelming tension left Pesci frozen in fear. Seeing his trembling, cowering form, Ago couldn't help but burst into laughter.

"You've got to be kidding me, right? You... you've never killed anyone before, have you?"

Ago's mocking tone cut deep. Pesci couldn't muster a single rebuttal, his body shaking as he shrank into himself.

Prosciutto grew increasingly frustrated, but suddenly, he sensed something moving behind him.

A gunshot rang out in the room.

"Aaaaaahhhhhh!!!"

Screaming, Pesci clutched his shoulder and rolled on the floor in pain.

One of Ago's subordinates, who had barely managed to recover from The Grateful Dead's aging ability, had aimed and fired a shot.

At his feet, the ice Pesci had dropped earlier rolled across the floor.

The aging ability of The Grateful Dead accelerates as body temperature rises. Conversely, cooling the body slows the process,

and in the worst-case scenario, it can even reverse the aging back to youth.

Just as Prosciutto lunged at Ago's subordinate, Ago swiftly retrieved a second gun hidden under his desk and aimed the barrel at the prone Pesci.

"Watch closely, you *mammone* ! This is how you kill someone————!!!"

"Eeeeeeeeeek!!!"

A second gunshot echoed. Ago collapsed, crumpling to the floor.

Pesci turned toward the source of the shot. Standing there, holding a pistol wrested from the enemy, was Prosciutto. Smoke curled from the gun barrel. At Prosciutto's feet lay the shriveled, desiccated corpse of Ago's subordinate, his neck crushed underfoot.

"Hah...! Don't mess with meeeeeeeeeeee!!!"

Pesci began kicking Ago's lifeless body over and over. His wounded shoulder throbbed painfully with each movement, and his face twitched in anger at being mocked.

"You thought you could make fun of me...?! Who the hell's the *mammone* now, huh?! Take this! And this!"

"...Hey. What the hell are you doing? Stop it."

"How do you kill someone, huh?! Teach me how, damn iiiiiiit !!"

"Pesci!" Prosciutto snapped.

At the sharp reprimand, Pesci froze in place.

Pesci turned to look at Prosciutto.

His anger had not subsided, and his gaze quickly shifted to Ago's jacket.

"That's right... you said something about not wanting to stain your *precious memories* with blood, didn't you...?!"

A dark, dull light flickered in Pesci's eyes. Prosciutto felt his skin crawl all at once.

" *S-stop it! Pesci—!* "

"Then how about this...! Using my own '*needle and thread*' , I'll tear those *precious needle-and-thread memories* you were so proud of to shreds!!"

It happened in an instant.

Pesci's Stand, Beach Boy , lashed out, and its hook tore through Ago's jacket.

The jacket flew into the air and fell to the floor, where Pesci stomped on it.

The left sleeve was completely severed at the shoulder.

"...What the hell... was that for...?"

The brief satisfaction of Pesci's outburst was short-lived. Prosciutto's words, heavy with anger, snapped him back to reality. Looking at his clearly enraged big bro, Pesci's face turned pale.

Prosciutto strode toward Pesci with firm steps.

(*He's going to hit me...!*)

Instinctively, Pesci raised both hands to shield his head.

But Prosciutto walked past him without a word and picked up the torn remains of Ago's jacket from the floor.

"Why?! Big bro Prosciutto...! Why are you taking his side?!"

"...I saw it in him... as clear as day... the *resolve* of a true gangster. If his brother were here right now, he would undoubtedly be proud of him... proud of the *resolve* he showed! But... the feeling in my chest now... is the exact opposite of that. Do you understand what I'm saying, Pesci? Do you get it?"

Prosciutto's eyes, filled with disappointment and pity, bore into Pesci.

It was at that moment Pesci realized. His big bro had seen a reflection of himself and Pesci in the bond between Filo and Ago as brothers.

Still holding the damaged jacket, Prosciutto quietly left the room alone.

"Ah... Big bro! Where are you going...?! Big bro Prosciutto!"

Calling out weakly, Pesci chased after his big bro's retreating figure.

Chapter 4

The blurry footage from a security camera played on a laptop screen.

The video showed Prosciutto and Pesci. As soon as their figures disappeared from the screen, Filo's subordinate paused the playback.

In the *sarto*'s reception room, Prosciutto sat in a chair, a gun pressed to his temple by one of Filo's subordinates. Filo placed a rocks glass filled with ice in front of Prosciutto and poured grappa—the same kind found in Ago's room—into the glass.

"I had an acquaintance in Sicily who runs a winery. But then... that person lost in a battle with you *Passione* goons a long while ago and is no longer of this world," Filo said.

Sitting across from Prosciutto, Filo raised his own glass and toasted, "To my brother..."

Prosciutto didn't touch his glass. He sat silently, staring at Filo.

"...Let's get back to the matter at hand, little Prosciutto. Ten days ago, your partner tore up my brother's jacket, and you took it from

the scene. You admit this, don't you? The camera footage, blurry and poorly placed as it is, doesn't lie. And on top of that! You brought that jacket here to this *sarto* . Then just today! From this very shop, that same partner of yours acted on his own and snatched it away!"

Filo continued, taking another swig of his drink, "There's also the *sarto* 's testimony to back it up."

"You agreed to it, didn't you?" Prosciutto suddenly broke his silence.

Filo stopped pouring more alcohol into his empty glass. "...What did you say?"

"You agreed to what was going to happen with Ago, didn't you? The Boss... *does not forgive traitors* . Are you planning to turn Passione into your enemy?"

"Little Prosciutto, you think I'm doing this to you for something as petty as **revenge** or **payback** ? Do you honestly believe that?"

Prosciutto didn't respond to Filo's question.

"This is business. Between my organization and Passione, between me and your Boss, it's a business arrangement. And in business, *trust* is everything. It's unfortunate, but... my brother's death was his own doing. He *betrayed* that trust. On *that* point, I have no complaints."

"But!" Filo raised his voice in anger.

"What happened afterward is a different matter. That man! That partner of yours—he disgraced my brother's corpse and shredded his jacket like trash!"

Clutching the lapel of his own jacket, Filo's voice trembled with rage.

"This suit... It's a special bespoke piece, made from the same fabric as my brother's. A suit filled with memories, where I even particularly chose the *needle* and *thread* used. Just now, I said that a suit is like a second skin, another version of oneself, didn't I? Your Boss showed *respect*. He let me choose between my organization or my brother. That's why I trusted Passione and accepted my brother's fate. But your subordinate betrayed that trust! My beloved brother was killed *twice*. What kind of brother could ever accept that?!"

"..."

"This isn't *revenge*. It's punishment—punishment just like what my brother, Ago, received! But unlike my brother, you still have a chance. St. Homobonus of Cremona atoned for his sins by sewing clothes in the name of Christ. Like him, you have a chance to redeem yourselves."

Filo glanced at his wristwatch.

"There isn't much time left before my brother's funeral. I won't ask for more if the jacket is returned. So I'll ask you again: where is that scumbag—and where is my brother's jacket?"

Prosciutto heard the faint sound of a finger touching a trigger.

In the unnervingly quiet room, only the ticking of the clock filled the air.

"I don't know," Prosciutto answered, breaking the silence.

"It's true that I was the one who brought your brother's jacket here. I have my own respect for bespoke suits. It would've been a shame to

leave it neglected like that. Not for Ago, but for the jacket itself. The *sarto* here is skilled. He's from the south and knows Neapolitan tailoring well, so I entrusted it to him."

He leaned back in his chair and added, "...But that's all there is to it. I don't know anything else. He's not a kid, y'know. It's none of my business where Pesci ran off with the jacket."

Prosciutto draped his right arm over the back of his chair and crossed his legs with elegance. Despite the gun pointed at him, he was relaxed with such a dignified attitude as though this were his own room.

Sweat dripped down Filo's temple. He was supposed to have the upper hand, yet in the presence of Prosciutto, he felt an overwhelming pressure. Even as a member of *Passione*, he had never experienced such tension when facing a mere gangster before.

Filo's gaze drifted from Prosciutto's sharp face to the dark-colored suit he wore, as if searching for the source of this intimidation.

A herringbone-like pattern stood out in white against the black fabric. The jacket's shoulder line rose sharply and ruggedly toward the pronounced sleeve caps, while the matching trousers followed the contours of his crossed legs without losing their three-dimensional shape. At a glance, it was a structured tailoring so overwhelming it left an impression on the viewer, the complete opposite of the *bespoke suit* with light and soft Neapolitan tailoring Filo himself wore.

"You can't survive without style and presence"—this was a saying often heard in the world of gangsters. Filo understood it to mean that bluffing and dressing oneself up beyond one's actual ability were more important than raw strength.

"Wearing a suit elevates a man's class"—this was exactly what it meant. Prosciutto certainly wore his suit well. His perfectly balanced style went beyond being called "statuesque"; it could practically be called "super-statuesque" with its imposing presence that overwhelmed others. But in the end, it was just a bluff, nothing more than an illusion created by the suit.

Filo let out a small sigh of relief. If this had been northern tailoring, Prosciutto's veneer might never have cracked.

*(Just as I thought, this is all central Italy's **half-assed** tailoring amounts to.)*

He glanced down at Prosciutto's feet. Naturally, he expected formal leather shoes, but instead, they were high-end branded loafers.

Feeling as though he had glimpsed Prosciutto's audacity as a gangster, Filo muttered to himself, "Quite the nerve." He was about to resume the conversation when a small question suddenly crossed his mind.

A suit with hard tailoring that couldn't rival the north, and soft tailoring that couldn't match the south. *Why is this guy able to appear so completely relaxed when he's wearing such an indecisive style?*

It was as if he were wearing Neapolitan tailoring—

"...Little Prosciutto, this might sound bizarre, but I owe you my thanks. You stood up for my brother's damaged jacket. For that, I'm grateful. I'll also acknowledge that you're a true gangster...But your partner is different. That thug is nothing like you!"

Prosciutto's eye faintly twitched at Filo's sharp tone.

"You said that man isn't a kid, but I disagree. His childish behavior when lashing out at my brother's corpse and damaging the jacket out of spite is exactly like a spoiled brat throwing a tantrum, isn't it?"

Glancing briefly at the laptop on the desk, Filo continued.

"In the end, the security camera footage says it all. To be honest, even I don't believe the jacket will come back unscathed. It's a top-quality suit, after all. He's probably sold it off by now or, worse, subjected it to even greater abuse to satisfy his filthy ego. Anyone who saw his pathetic whining and bawling over a mere flesh wound would think the same.

No matter how much time passes, that man will stay latched onto his mother's fat breast and never let go! That's the kind of lowly *mammone* he is—!"

At that moment, the air in the room changed completely.

" *Mammone* , you say...?"

A suffocating pressure filled the room. One by one, Filo's subordinates collapsed where they stood.

Leaking from Prosciutto, burning with quiet fury, was the unconscious power of his Stand.

Filo, unaware of the accelerated aging taking hold of his body, began to gasp for air, his breathing ragged.

"Hey. Watch your words, will you? We're gangsters, after all."

"You... actually believe the jacket will come back? Seriously?"

Why...?"

At Filo's question, Prosciutto quietly closed his eyes.

The Sicilian winery from a few years ago flashed vividly in his mind. It was a memory of that day, one he could never forget.

Chapter 5

"I'll finish this myself! Right here, right now!!"

It was only a matter of time before the captured Pesci would spill information about the team. Prosciutto activated his Stand, ready to eliminate both the assassination target and Pesci. However, Salute's panicked shouting stopped him in his tracks.

"What... What the? What the hell are you doing?! You bastaaard !"

Using his right hand, the only one he could move freely, Pesci had begun stitching his own mouth shut. With the 'needle and thread' of his Stand, Beach Boy , he endured the excruciating pain, continuing to sew his lips together without stopping.

"If I don't talk....! Because... my... teammates....! Because my big bro *trusts* me....! I know... I know my big bro will come for me! That's why....! I ain't saying a word!"

Killing his cowardly heart, Pesci silenced himself. It was a desperate act of *resolve* to protect the team's secrets!

Seeing Pesci's determination to be a true gangster, with a "nobility"

as hard and unyielding as a diamond, Prosciutto felt ashamed of himself and withdrew his Stand.

Chapter 6

On that day, Prosciutto once gave up on Pesci.
But never again. He would never abandon Pesci a second time.

No matter what happens in the future, even if his own body were to decay, Prosciutto swore firmly in his heart to continue watching over his "younger brother"'s **growth** until the day Pesci grasped his **glory** .

"—He's the **needle and thread** that I chose."
After a brief pause, Prosciutto opened his eyes.

"An outsider that isn't part of our organization's team... has no right to call my Pesci a '*mammone* ! '"

RMBL RMBL RMBL RMBL—!

The sound of his heartbeat was deafeningly loud and fast, pounding in his chest.

From Prosciutto emanated an overwhelming **presence** ...! The black suit he wore now exuded an entirely different aura than before—a weighty, oppressive sense of authority.

Facing Prosciutto, Filo came to a realization. He was nothing like this man. While Filo had simply relied on his suit as a crutch, everything about Prosciutto came from within. If Prosciutto sought peace, his suit exuded the softness of the south. If he displayed his will to fight, it carried the heavy strength of the north. That's the kind of suit this was...!

(Well... I was wrong! What was 'half-assed' wasn't the tailoring...! It was me—the one wearing it! The real 'mammone' was me...!!)

It's not the suit that elevates a man's class.

It's Prosciutto who elevates the class of the suit...!

"You can't survive without style and presence." Now, facing the "true dandy" that was Prosciutto, Filo felt he finally, truly understood the meaning of those words in his heart.

Just how many life-or-death battles must one survive to embody such *class* ?

What terrified Filo most was the unknown strength of Passione as an organization, how many assassins of Prosciutto's caliber it might possess, and the unfathomable power of the Boss who ruled at its peak.

Filo's throat was so dry he couldn't even swallow.

As if seeking salvation, his sinewy, aged-looking arm reached out toward Prosciutto's glass of liquor. Filo was on the verge of losing consciousness.

Clink...

Suddenly, a piece of melted ice struck the glass.

Filo suddenly snapped back to awareness. His withered arm had regained its former flesh and vitality. At the end of that extended arm, Prosciutto's untouched glass was now covered in condensation, forming a small puddle on the desk.

(...Was it... an illusion...?)

At almost the exact same moment, the clock in the reception room struck noon.

Filo's subordinates were still sprawled across the floor in a daze. Struggling to his feet, his body swaying, Filo managed to stand and aimed his gun at Prosciutto's forehead.

"...Little Prosciutto. I've heard your story. But... time's up. I came here today to settle a score. And settle it I will! Since the jacket didn't come back...! I'll make sure you take your **punishment** !"

Just as Filo was about to pull the trigger, there was a knock at the reception room door.

One of Filo's subordinates, who had been waiting outside, quickly entered and handed him a phone.

"It's from your wife," he said.

"—It's me. I'm sorry, but I'll be a little late for the funeral... but I promise, I'll be there."

"Oh! Filo! Come back right now! Ago's jacket has come home!"

"What?! The jacket...?!"

"It's so beautiful! The person who was keeping it brought it back! He said, 'I'm sorry it's late,' and returned it! So please, come home quickly, okay?"

"...Oh... oh... oooooh...!"

Overwhelmed by the unexpected good news from his wife, Filo collapsed to the ground in tears.

As Filo sobbed uncontrollably, Prosciutto finally reached for his glass of liquor. Smirking to himself with a hint of pride, he twirled the ice inside the glass with his fingertip.

"You've done well to live up to our **trust** ... haven't you?"

He murmured cheerfully to himself, raising the glass slightly.

"To Pesci."

He took a quiet sip of his drink.

Drawn by the scent of the vineyard, he felt he could *drift off to sleep at any moment* ...

Listening to the sound of a distant train whistle through the open window, Prosciutto let himself bask in the soothing, pleasant feeling.

fine.

Translated by Vish (@vishkujo)